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ABSTRACT

The Snowmass Institute for Advanced Management Studies' workshops on "Achieving Excellence through Strategic Planning" are designed to assist college personnel in developing a strategic approach to planning and managing their department, division, college/school, institution, or system. Participants in the workshop's first track: (1) conducted an audit of their institutions' internal environment and institutional culture to determine strengths and weaknesses in the mission statement, goals and objectives, governance structure, programs, faculty, finances, facilities, and planning; (2) assessed their institutions' external environment with respect to demographic characteristics, social indicators, political change, technological advances, and workplace changes to determine opportunities and weaknesses; and (3) select strategic options (e.g., directing resources toward higher quality, public service, new student clientele, or research; or retrenchment and/or reduction in scale) and tactical alternatives. The second track of the workshop made extensive use of case studies to examine the planning process. Participants could elect to follow either track or mix sessions from both. Topics, such as outcomes assessment, institutional effectiveness, linking accreditation and strategic planning, grantsmanship/resources development, and scenario development were considered in special sessions. Eight figures display various analytical forms, models and inventories pertaining to the workshops, and two case studies of strategic planning are appended. (EJV)

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"Achieving Excellence Through Strategic Planning"

Report

The 13th Annual Management Institute

for College and University Executives

July 17 - 22, 1988

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The Snowmass Institute

The Snowmass Institute for Advanced Management Studies was founded in the summer of 1975 to offer week-long programs in management and marketing for college and university personnel. The goal of the Institute is to uniquely combine professional development activities and relaxation in one package. Sessions are scheduled in the morning and early evening, leaving the afternoon and late evening open so participants can take full advantage of the tremendous entertainment and recreation opportunities in the Snowmass/Aspen mountain resort area.

Over the years several different programs have been conducted by persons with national reputations in the field. Basic and advanced market programs ran for several years. During the fall of 1980, Drs. Robert G. Cope and Warren H. Groff were asked to develop a conceptual framework for a workshop on the topic "Strategic Planning and Management." That workshop began with an overview and introduction to the topic followed by a discussion of models for strategic planning and management drawn from the literature and personal experience in public and private two-year, four-year, and university contexts. The next two days were spent in discussing techniques for assessing an institution's external environment. The third day was spent in discussing techniques for auditing an institution's internal environment. The fourth day dealt with integration including linking budgeting to planning. On the fifth day, several institutional representatives from various types of contexts presented their plans and the workshop leaders offered some final comments. This workshop format was followed in 1981, 1982, 1983, and 1984.

Numerous participants in the workshop requested an advanced workshop on strategic planning and management. Topics suggested for inclusion were numerous. The topics included (1) refinements in assessing the external

environment, (2) elaboration in auditing the internal environment, (3) use of outcomes assessment information in strategic planning, (4) linking accreditation and strategic planning, (5) consortia and partnerships, (6) the involvement of alumni in strategic planning, (7) strategic planning and grantsmanship/resource development, (8) creating visions of the future, and many more. During the workshop in 1984 and throughout the fall of that year, the two workshop leaders developed the conceptual frameworks and specific topics for two institutes. (See FIGURE 1) These two institutes were run July 21-26, 1985, July 20-25, 1986, June 28 - July 3, 1987, and June 28 - July 3, 1988. This is a brief report of the two institutes run in 1988.

The Program

Overview of Theme and Track I and Track II

The Snowmass Institutes on "Achieving Excellence through Strategic Planning" are for college personnel who want to develop a strategic approach to planning and managing their department, division, college/school, institution or system. The reports on education indicate clearly that we must improve quality to achieve excellence. One tool for achieving excellence is strategic thinking and planning.

Track I is organized in a manner that encourages participants to progress through a series of stages: (1) audit of their institution's internal environment to determine strengths and weaknesses, (2) assess their institution's external environment to determine opportunities and weaknesses, and (3) select strategic options and tactical alternatives. Track II makes extensive use of case studies and discussion of process. Participants can

elect to follow either Track I, Track II, or mix sessions in Track I and II and the "Managing Enrollment" institute that is run during the same week.

Participants

Participants were asked to complete a characteristics sheet and indicate what they hoped to accomplish by the end of the workshop. Characteristics of the participants are displayed in FIGURE 2 and the extent to which their institutions are doing strategic planning is displayed in FIGURE 3.

Participants completed the Kolb learning styles inventory[1] and the Myers Briggs instrument.[2] The learning styles inventory provides scores for four preferences labeled (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation. The Myers Briggs instrument indicates four planning preferences: pragmatic manager, pragmatic humanist, strategic manager, and strategic humanist. FIGURE 4 is a display of learning preferences of participants. FIGURE 5 is a display of participant planning style preferences. FIGURE 6 is a display of the relationship between learning style preferences and planning style preferences.

Models of Strategic Planning

Numerous models of strategic planning were presented. These models included examples from the Council of Independent Colleges (formerly the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges), the Academy for Educational Development, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and numerous two-year colleges. These models all suggest an assessment of an organization's external environment to determine opportunities and threats and an audit of an organization's internal environment to determine strengths and weaknesses.

External Environment

The external environment includes demographic characteristics, social indicators, economic trends, political change, technological advances, changes in the workplace, special focus areas such as information technologies, value shifts, and numerous other variables. The literature indicates at least four techniques for assessing the external environment: (1) needs assessment, (2) market analysis, (3) environmental scanning, and (4) trend analysis.

Participants were given a great deal of information about the above-mentioned variables in the external environment. This was followed by a discussion about the techniques for assessing the external environment. Participants then listed opportunities and threats in their external environment. They were then grouped by institutional type to discuss demographic, social economic, political, and technological issues.

Internal Environment

The internal environment consists of institutional culture, how the institution functions, its strategy, and dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness. An audit of the internal environment would include a review of the mission statement, goals and objectives, governance structure, certificate and degree programs, learning and learning resources, faculty and teaching, finances and facilities, organization and administration, and planning and outcomes.

Program review can be accomplished through an intensive examination of three aggregate criteria: (1) centrality, (2) quality, and (3) market viability. Centrality is the proximity of the program to the central purpose of the institution. Quality is a function of (1) faculty, (2) students, (3) library holdings, (4) equipment, (5) facilities, (6) finances, (7) support

services, and (8) other program characteristics. Market viability is a function of competition, image, and a variety of external factors.

Case Studies

Numerous case studies were presented throughout the workshops. Case studies in Track I included models from the Council of Independent Colleges, the Academy for Educational Development, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Participants in Track I also reviewed more detailed explanations on North Central Technical College and the Tennessee State Board of Regents strategic planning project and the strategic plan at Shelby State Community College.

Participants in both Tracks reviewed case studies for Bourbon College, Center-Right, Millikin, Carnegie Mellon, University of Minnesota, Bradley University, Caring Arts, Southwest Joint Center, College of Education - San Diego State University, and Edmonds Community College. Participants in Track II studied these cases more extensively than participants in Track I.

Participants in Tracks I and II received more extensive explanations of strategic planning at Mount Union College in Ohio by President Harold Kolenbrander and at Iowa State University by Jean Adams, Chairperson of the Strategic Planning Committee. Drs. Kolanbrander and Adams are alumni of the Snowmass Institutes. Statements of these two case studies are in the Appendix.

Strategic Options and Tactical Alternatives

The purpose for assessing the external environment is to identify, hopefully rank order, opportunities and threats. The purpose for auditing the internal environment is to analyze strengths and weaknesses. The intent is to maximize strengths, minimize weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and reduce or eliminate threats. Information obtained from assessing the external

environment and auditing the internal environment should yield insights about stratgegic options and tactical alternatives.

Strategic options include (1) directing resources toward higher quality, (2) directing resources toward public service, (3) directing resources toward new student clientele, (4) directing resources toward research, and (5) retrenchment and/or reduction in scale.

Tactical alternatives for the strategic option of higher quality include (1) diagnostic services including career life planning and basic skills testing, (2) content either in a "stand-alone" format or an integrated format, (3) delivery systems including technology to reach "distant learners," (4) evaluation methodology including competency-based formats, and (5) outcomes and follow-up studies.

Tactical alternatives for the strategic option of public service include (1) small business development, (2) economic development, (3) technology transfer, (4) building better boards, (5) issues clarification, (6) strategic planning for community agencies, (7) community goal setting projects, and (8) community leadership development projects.

Tactical alternatives for the strategic option of new student clientele include (1) programs to upgrade skills of market segments of the current workforce, (2) dislocated workers who must be retrained, (3) migrants and immigrants, (4) international students either on campus or in developing nations, (6) single parents, and numerous other market segments.

FIGURE 7 is a model of strategic planning and management and FIGURE 8 is a form for displaying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Integration

Another important segment of the workshops dealt with integration. Integration includes horizontal coordination of organizational functions such as academic affairs, student services, administration and development. Integration includes vertical articualtion between department, division, college or school, university, and/or system levels. Integration includes linking planning to management and evaluation through a budgeting and resource allocation process.

Visions of the Future

The ultimate purpose of the assessment of the external environment and the audit of the internal environment is to assist institutional leadership to envision alternative scenarios and a preferred scenario for the institution. To assist participants to focus on the future, a framework was developed which labeled the period 1955 to 1985 as post industrial society, 1985 to 2000 as early technical society, and 2000 to 2020 as advanced technical society. A great deal of information was presented about changes occurring in various systems -- business and industry, health and human services, government and industry, and education and training. The report of the AACJC Commission on the Future of the Community College was highlighted.[3]

Special Topics

Special sessions were presented on selected topics such as (1) outcomes assessment, (2) institutional effectiveness, (3) linking accreditation and strategic planning, and (4) strategic planning and grantsmanship/resources development and (5) scenario development.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems generated a conceptual framework for outcomes in the 1970s after thoroughly reviewing more

than 80 studies on the topic; this conceptual framework along with research on outcomes by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education provided the basis for the discussion on outcomes.[4]

Achieving excellence through institutional effectiveness is a major focus of the current reform in education. Criteria for Accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges were reviewed along with the Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness.[5] In addition, the group reviewed the Roueche - Baker community college excellence model.[6]

Regional accrediting assocations have encouraged institutions to make extensive use of planning processes and documents in seeking reaffirmation of accreditation. The Williamsport Area Community College and the Pennsylvania State University experiences were discussed.

Grantsmanship and resource development are becoming increasingly more important as costs increase and the local and state economic sources shift. Strategic planning yields long-term images and visions that institutional personnel can convert to multi-year operational plans that can be used in grantsmanship or the development of "case statements" for private and public resource development activities.

Thursday evening provided an opportunity for scenario development. Participants were provided with information about the state of Eureka. Eureka has a high level of poverty; its citizens have poor health, high schools have high dropout rates, high levels of teenage pregnancy, and the state has numerous other problems. Participants were divided into groups as indicated in the Myers Briggs planning preference: strategic manager, pragmatic manager, strategic humanist, and pragmatic humanist. Each of the four groups developed

a scenario of life in the 21st Century and the implications for postsecondary education.

Conclusion

Between now and the 21st century, education will face challenges as profound as those that caused the invention of schools, the creation of colleges, the transformation of nineteenth century small colleges into universities, the evolution of land-grant universities, and the spread of two-year colleges. Drucker expresses the challenge as follows:

> The biggest "infrastructure" challenge for this country in the next decade is not the billions needed for railroads, highways and energy, but the American school system, from kindergarten through Ph.D. program and the post-graduate education of adults. And the challenge requires something far scarcer than money - thinking and risk-taking.[7]

Professional educators must redesign and restructure the education and training industry. Professional educators must design new information age paradigms for an advanced technical society. Strategic thinking is one tool to help reach that long term goal.

Footnotes

[1] David A. Kolb, Irwin M. Rubin, and James M. McIntyre, Organization Psychology, an Experiential Approach (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Hall, Inc., 1971.)

Bernice McCarthy, The 4MAT System (Oak Brook, IL: EXCEL, Inc., 1980.)

[2] I. B. Myers, Manual: The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press, Inc., 1972.)

[3] Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century. (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988.)

[4] Oscar T. Lenning, Yong S. Lee, Sidney S. Micek, and Allen L. Service, A Structure for the Outcomes of Postsecondary Education (Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1977.)

Carolyn M. Taylor, Robert L. Davey, and Kathleen A. Bolland, Vocational Education Outcomes: Annotated Bibliography of Related Literature (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1979.)

[5] Criteria for Accreditation. (Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1987.)

[6] John E. Roueche and George A. Baker III. Access and Excellence: The Open Door College. (Washington, D.C.: The Community College Press, 1987.)

Carolyn M. Taylor, Robert L. Davey, and Kathleen A. Bolland, Vocational Education Outcomes: Annotated Bibliography of Related Literature (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1979.)

FIGURE 1

	TRACK I	TRACK II
Mon. 8:00	Introductions and Characteristics of Participants Overview of Strategic Planning and Management and the Institutes Planning Styles and Learning Preferences Cope and Groff	
9:30	Planning Models and Resources Auditing Auditing the Internal Environment Groff	From the Strategic to the Contextual Planning Model and 6 Concepts Cope
11:00	Case Examples Cope	Visions of the Future 2020 Groff
5:30	Program Review Outcomes: Output and Impact Institutional Effectiveness Groff	Three Process Models: 6:6; Strawman; and 0 + S = Choices Cope
Tue. 8:00	Assessing the External Environment Demographic Trends Economic Trends Governmental Planning Social Expectations Technological Advances Value Shifts Groff	
9:30	Subgroup Discussions Two-Year Colleges - East Private Colleges - East Senior Institutions - East Two-Year Colleges - West Private Colleges - West Senior Institutions - West Groff	
11:00	Subgroup Reports - Demographic, Social, Economic Issues Integration: Planning and Budgeting; Assumptions and Goals Groff Categories	
5:30	Macro Social Issues, Education Reform Strategic Planning and Accreditation Grantsmanship Groff	Case Examples Cope
Wed. 8:00	How to Implement a Strategic Plan The Mount Union Experience Harold Kolenbrander	
10:30	Iowa State University	Jean Adams
Thur. 8:00	Strategic Options & Tactical Alternatives New Student Clientele Higher Quality Public Service/Research Retrenchment Groff	Napolean, Sun Zi and the 5 Rings on Strategy: Multiple Approaches to Planning/Management Cope
9:30	Participants Rank Order Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as well as Strategic Options and Tactical Alternatives Groff	Four Phases of Planning: Toward Environmental Enrichment and Personal Expression Cope
11:00	Integration Linking Planning and Budgeting Groff	Case Studies Cope
5:30	Developing Four Alternative Scenarios Based on Planning Styles Groff	
Fri. 8:00	Visions of the Future - 2020 Groff	Participant Case Problems and Consultants's Recommendations Cope
9:30	Graduation	Cope and Groff

FIGURE 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

TRACK I	TRACK II	
		GOVERNANCE
4	7	State-wide system, 1 board
8	12	Single institution, own board
3	14	Multi-campus institution, own board
10	10	Private, own board
1	5	Other
		LOCATION
7	9	Rural
8	16	Suburban
10	17	Urban
1	6	All Three
		ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT
6	10	Depressed
10	22	Steady State
10	16	Expanding
		STAGE OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
2	2	0 - 9 years old
3	6	10 - 19 years old
8	18	20 - 29 years old
1	4	30 - 39 years old
2	0	40 - 49 years old
8	20	50 + years old
		FUTURE ENROLLMENT DIRECTION
3	8	Expansion, 10% or more enrollment increase expected
8	16	Expansion, 5-10% enrollment increase expected
11	24	Steady State
2	0	Reduced Scale, 5-10% enrollment decrease expected
1	0	Reduced Scale, 10% or more enrollment decrease expected
		CURRENT FTE
6	8	Less than 1,000 FTE
13	10	1,000 to 4,999 FTE
2	14	5,000 to 9,999 FTE
3	10	10,000 to 19,000 FTE
2	2	20,000 to 29,000 FTE
0	4	30,000 or more
		INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
12	34	Collegial, broad-based, participatory mode of collaborative planning
10	8	Hierarchial, top down, mode of planning
4	6	Organized collective bargaining
26	48	

FIGURE 3A

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

		Yes	No
1.	Does your unit (department, division, college, institution, or system) have a plan to plan?	22	3
2.	Does your unit audit its internal environment?	18	7
3.	Does your unit analyze the results of the internal audit and rank order strengths and weaknesses?	13	12
4.	To what extent does your unit assess the external enviroment?		

		5	4	3	2	1	0
a.	Demographic characteristics	2	12	4	3	3	1
b.	Social indicators		6	11	3	3	2
c.	Economic trends	4	8	7	3	1	2
d.	Governmental planning	1	6	7	6	3	2
e.	Technological advances	1	6	8	7	3	
f.	Changes in the workplace	1	6	8	6	2	2
g.	Information technologies	1	5	7	7	4	1
h.	Value shifts		4	5	8	5	3

(5 - Outstanding, 4 - Good, 1 - Unsatisfactory, 0 - Non-existent)

		Yes	No
5.	Does your unit analyze the results of the external assessment and rank order opportunities and threats?	9	16
6.	Does your unit integrate the internal audit and external assessment in order to form visions of the future and alterntive scenarios?	10	15
7.	Does your unit make deliberate choices about strategic options and tactical alterntives as a prelude to managing and to evaluating?	11	14

FIGURE 3B

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

		Yes	No
1.	Does your unit (department, division, college, institution, or system) have a plan to plan?	41	6
2.	Does your unit audit its internal environment?	41	6
3.	Does your unit analyze the results of the internal audit and rank order strengths and weaknesses?	23	22
4.	To what extent does your unit assess the external enviroment?		

		5	4	3	2	1	0
a.	Demographic characteristics	10	23	13	3		
b.	Social indicators	3	19	15	7	2	1
c.	Economic trends	9	19	13	5	3	
d.	Governmental planning	2	14	11	12	6	3
e.	Technological advances	4	13	18	19	1	1
f.	Changes in the workplace	2	15	14	12	3	1
g.	Information technologies	5	20	13	6	2	1
h.	Value shifts	2	12	14	10	4	4

(5 - Outstanding, 4 - Good, 1 - Unsatisfactory, 0 - Non-existent)

		Yes	No
5.	Does your unit analyze the results of the external assessment and rank order opportunities and threats?	14	15
6.	Does your unit integrate the internal audit and external assessment in order to form visions of the future and alterntive scenarios?	15	14
7.	Does your unit make deliberate choices about strategic options and tactical alterntives as a prelude to managing and to evaluating?	14	15

FIGURE 4

KOLB LEARNING STYLE

ACCOMODATOR 23	CONCRETE EXPERIENCE		DIVERGER 11
1	5	1	4
3	14	5	3
ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION			REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION
6	8	4	0
4	9	5	4
CONVERGER 27	ABSTRACT CONCENTRALIZATION		ASSIMILATOR 13

FIGURE 5

MYERS BRIGGS PLANNING STYLE

PRAGMATIC MANAGER		STRATEGIC MANAGER	
3	4	3	5
4	7	10	9
1	1	10	8
2	0	3	4
PRAGMATIC HUMANIST		STRATEGIC HUMANIST	

FIGURE 6

LEARNING STYLE & PLANNING STYLE

	PRAGMATIC MANAGER	STRATEGIC MANAGER	PRAGMATIC HUMANIST	STRATEGIC HUMANIST	TOTALS
DIVERGER	1		1	9	11
ACCOMODATOR	8	7	2	6	23
CONVERGER	7	12	1	7	27
ASSIMILATOR	2	8		3	13
TOTALS	18	27	4	25	74

FIGURE 7

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

ASSESS & AUDIT

External Assessment

- Demographic Trends
- Social Indicators
- Economic Trends
- Political Change
- Technological Advances
- Changes In The Workplace
- Information Technologies
- Value Shifts

Images
Visions
Scenarios

- Mission, Goals & Objectives
- Governance Structure
- Programs: Academic & Occupational
- Students and Student Services
- Learning and Learning Resources
- Faculty and Teaching
- Finances and Facilities
- Organization and Administration
- Planning and Outcomes

Internal Audit

STRATIGIC OPTIONS & TACTICAL ALTERNATIVES

A. Higher Quality
   1. Diagnostic Services
   2. Content
   3. Delivery System
   4. Evaluation Methodology
   5. Outcomes & Follow-Up

B. Public Service
   1. Small Business Development
   2. Economic Development
   3. Technology Transfer
   4. Building Better Boards
   5. Issues Clarification
   6. Strategic Planning
   7. Goal Setting Projects
   8. Community Leadership Development

C. New Student Clientele

D. Research

E. Retrenchment/Reduction In Scale

STRAGEGY & MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 8

INSTITUTION _____ NAME _____

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	**OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**	**STRATEGIC OPTIONS**	**TACTICAL ALTERNATIVES**
A = Academic C = Capital (Plant, Equipment) F = Financial M = Managerial, Organizational P = Personnel	D = Demographic E = Economic S = Social P = Political T = Technological	___ Higher Quality ___ New Stud. Clientele ___ Public Service ___ Research ___ Retrenchment 1 = High, 5 = Low	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Appendix A

Mount Union College

Mount Union College, a residential liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church and located in Alliance, Ohio, is a coeducational institution enrolling approximately 1250 students nearly all of whom are of traditional college age. Approximately 95% live in college housing.

Three years ago, following the resignation of the President, the College's Board of Trustees decided that one important skill desired in the new President would be experience in planning. It had been fifteen years since the College had done any formal planning.

When the new president arrived, the decision was made to divide the strategic planning process into two parts: physical campus; and a plan for the development of the college's curriculum and other programs. Because it was thought to provide opportunity for more immediate returns, the physical campus plan was addressed first.

With the experience of highly experienced consultants the college developed its campus plan within a year. The planning committee, including representatives of the Board of Trustees, the faculty, students, and administration worked well with the planners who set a timetable for accomplishments at the outset. While the campus at large and the community's political leadership were kept apprised of our progress throughout the process, with the benefit of hindsight it is apparent that integration of community members into the planning committee would have been beneficial.

Completion of the plan was followed by formal endorsement by the College's Board of Trustees and presentation to the City Council. The issue has passed through numerous political hurdles and the plan was approved by the Council but not

by a sufficient margin to obviate a referendum by the citizens of the community. Currently the college is seeking a compromise which will obviate the need for the referendum.

The second element of the planning process -- development of the plan for the curriculum and other campus programs -- was launched with the aid of an outside grant. While the process has been slowed because of transition in the College's academic leadership, with the aid of an outside consultant and a carefully selected planning committee -- composition different from the committee for the physical campus -- a two day retreat to explore the college's strengths and opportunities resulted in several ideas which are currently being studied further by the Planning Committee.

The College has found that the process followed in developing the plan for the physical campus is being duplicated, in large measure, in developing the plan for curriculum and other campus pograms. In both cases politics is an extremely important factor. In developing and implementing the plan for the physical campus the primary focus of political differences is the larger community in which the college is located; in developing the plan for curriculum and other campus programs the focus of political differences is localized within the college community.

In summary there are two recommendations we offer from our experience: (1) Communicate, Communicate, Communicate, and (2) Persist, Persist, Persist. Careful, accurate communications with all interested constituencies and persistance toward the goal are critical to the successful implementation of a strategic plan.

Appendix B

Iowa State University

The case study of strategic planning at Iowa State University of Science and Technology was presented by Dr. Jean Adams, an alumna of last year's Snowmass Institute and chair of her university's strategic planning committee. Iowa State University (ISU) is the State of Iowa's land grant university with an enrollment of 25,000 to 26,000 students. Over two hundred programs are offered leading to degrees from the bachelors to Ph.D degrees.

ISU began strategic planning in June of 1987 when the university president appointed a 21 member committee, composed primarily of faculty but also including some administrators, staff, and students. The committee's charge is (1) to determine the major future directions for the institution, (2) to redesign the university into a smaller, more selective institution that operates fewer programs and manages them better, and (3) to identify programs for national eminence, institutional focus, or enhancement and to suggest which programs should be considered for possible consolidation or elimination.

Jean Adams emphasized the importance of the context of strategic planning within the institution. With respect to ISU, she identified the following relevant aspects of context: (1) a new president and turnover of several other top administrators; (2) demographic projections of relatively large declines of state population and tradition-age college students; (3) diminished ability of the state to support substantial increases in funding and an expectation that ISU should contribute to the economic development and diversification of the state's economy; and (4) trends toward increased Board of Regent and state government examination of such issues as progran duplication and operational efficiency of public institutions of higher education within the state.

The strategic planning process at ISU was presented in detail and a variety of documents, criteria, and evaluation forms were distributed to the participants to show how the ISU strategic planning committee determined (1) institutional strengths and weaknesses, (2) the operational implications of the university's status as a land grant university, (3) relevant external environmental issues and trends, (4) alternative organizational scenarios, (5) criteria and process for both a preliminary and a proposed on-going system of comprehensive review of academic programs, and (6) university-wide goals, objectives, and strategies.

ISU's planning committee intends to submit a report and recommendations to the university president during Fall of 1988. Included in the report will be suggestions and proposals for on-going strategic planning at Iowa State University.

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